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[54] DIE POSITIONING IN INTEGRATED CIRCUIT PACKAGING

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[58] Field of Search 257/784, 773, 257/787, 692, 678, 704; 438/127

[56] References Cited

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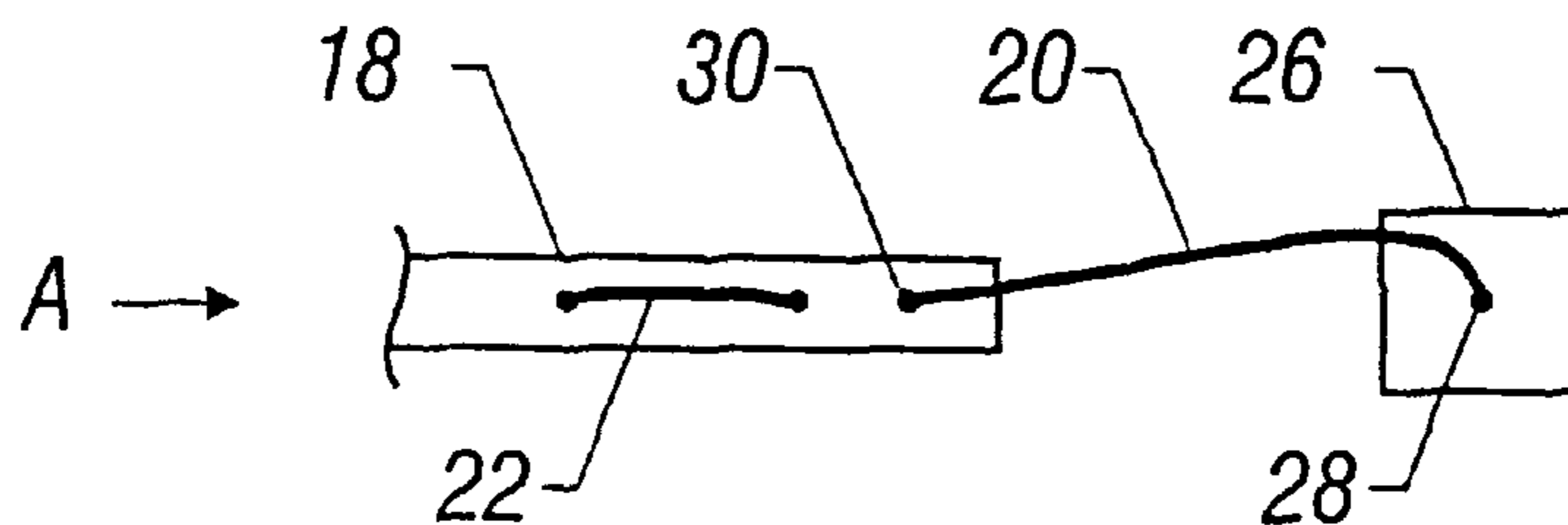
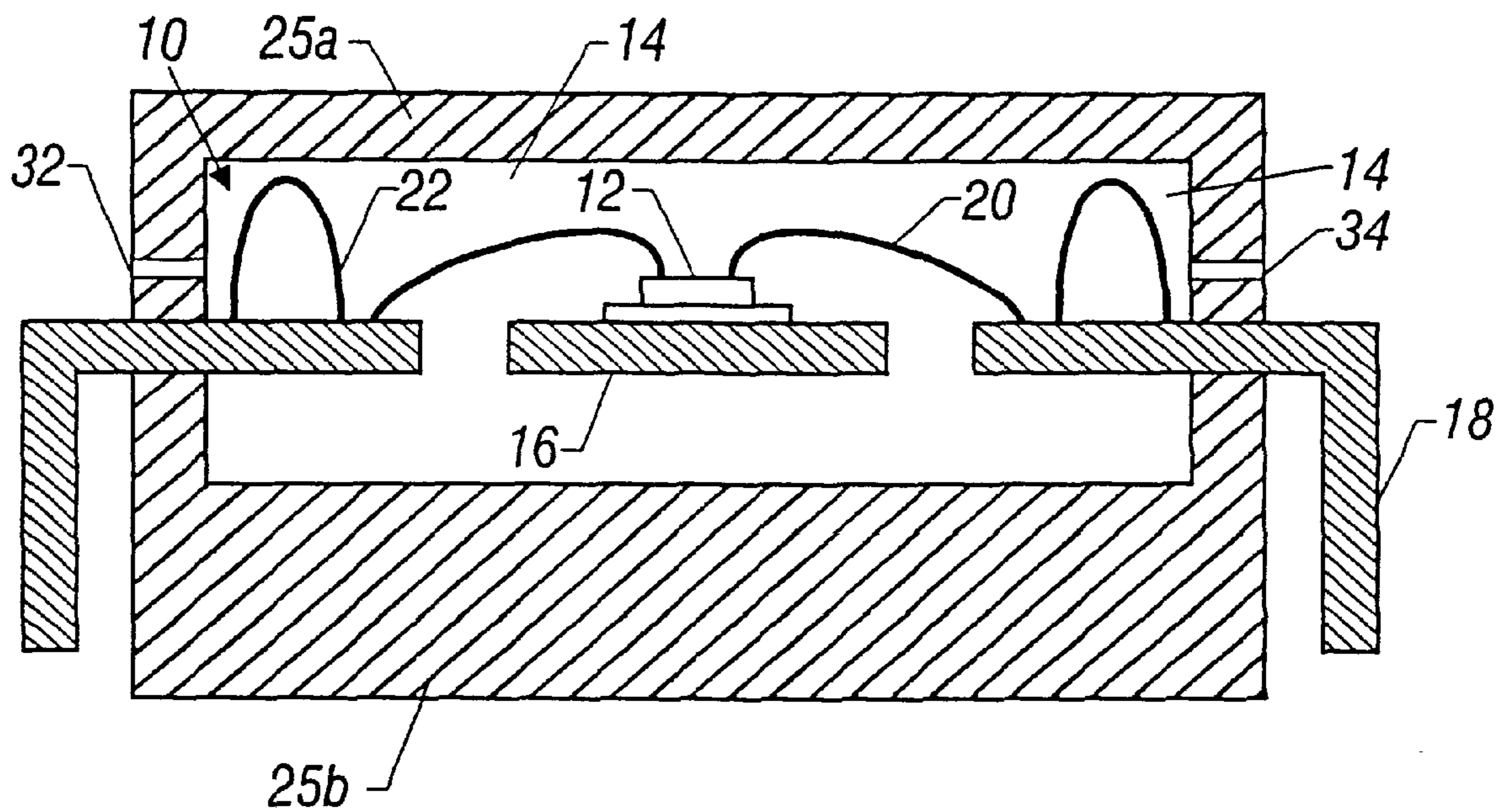
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[57] ABSTRACT

An integrated circuit die or chip may be positioned within an integrated circuit package by providing a spacer connected to the die and extending upwardly therefrom. When the die is overmolded, the spacer contacts the mold and spaces the die with respect to the mold. By forming the spacer using conventional wire bonding techniques, no additional process steps are necessary in forming the spacer and no additional parts are needed. The spacer wire bonds may be formed with wires which extend upwardly above the remaining wires, protecting the remaining wires from being contacted by the mold or from being positioned too close to the upper surface of the resulting molded package.

12 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets



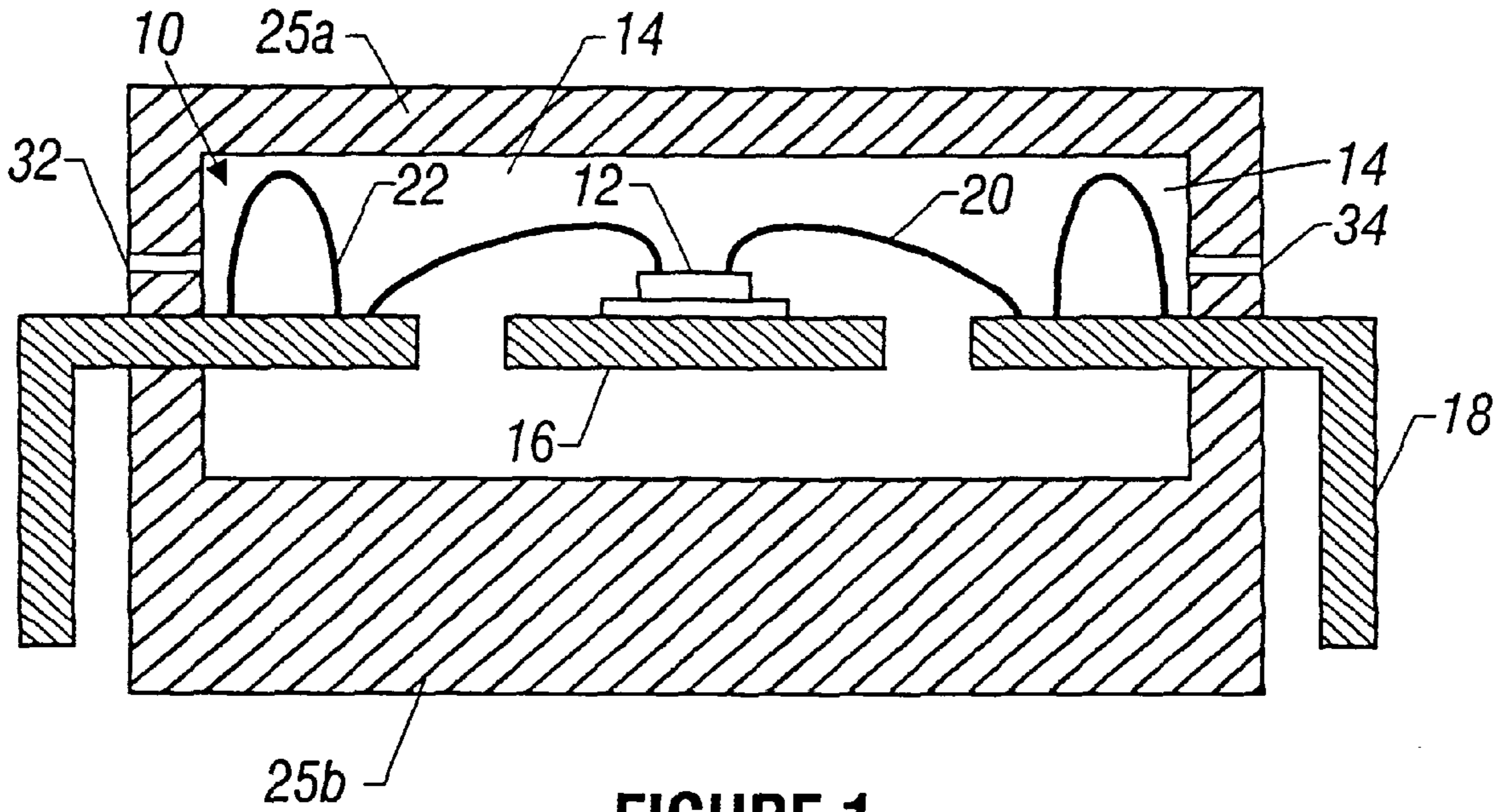


FIGURE 1

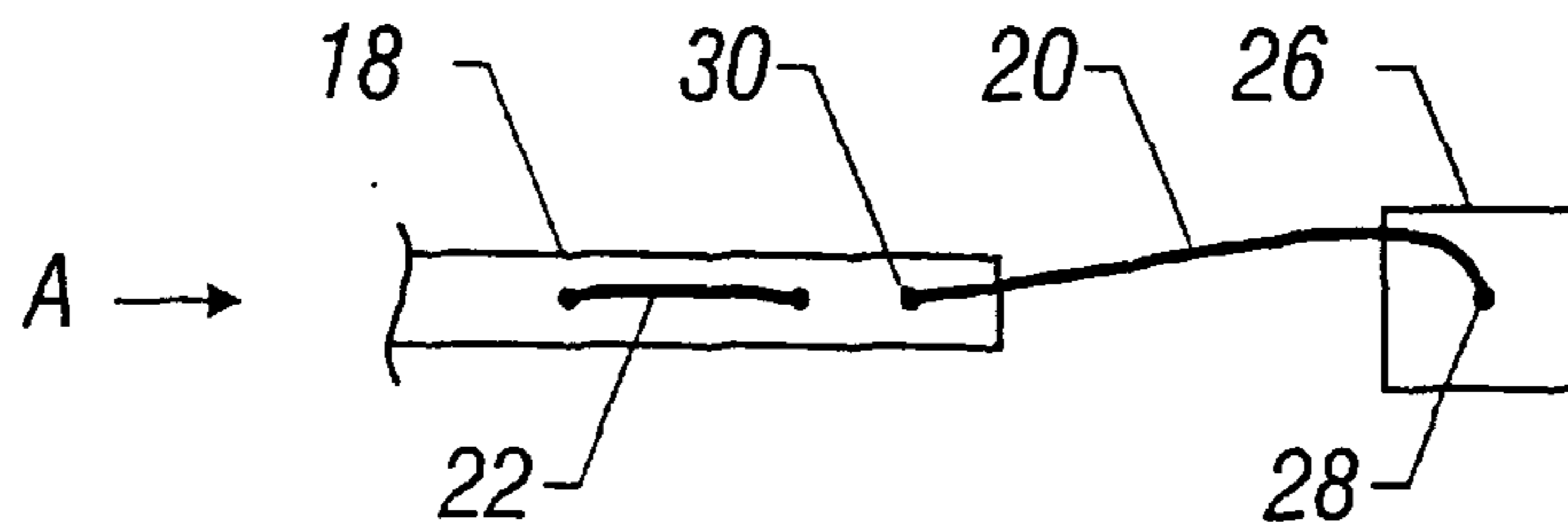


FIGURE 2

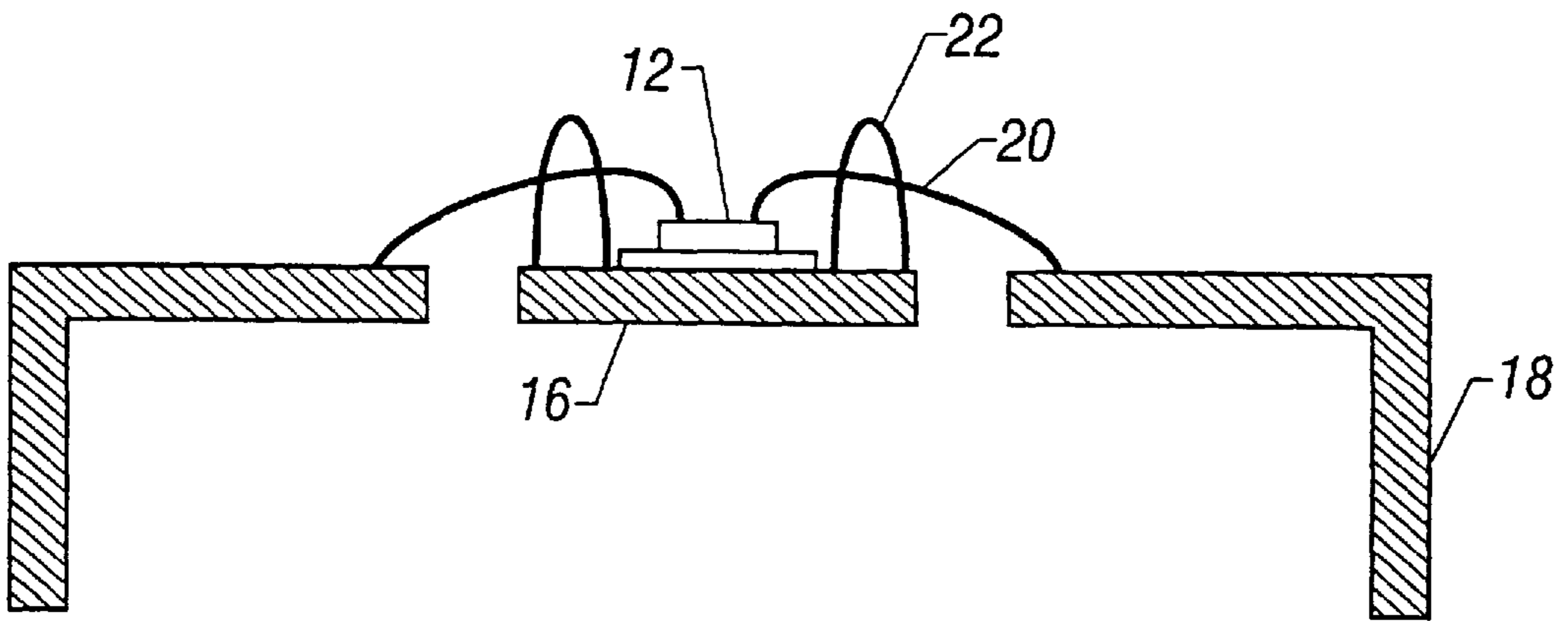


FIGURE 3

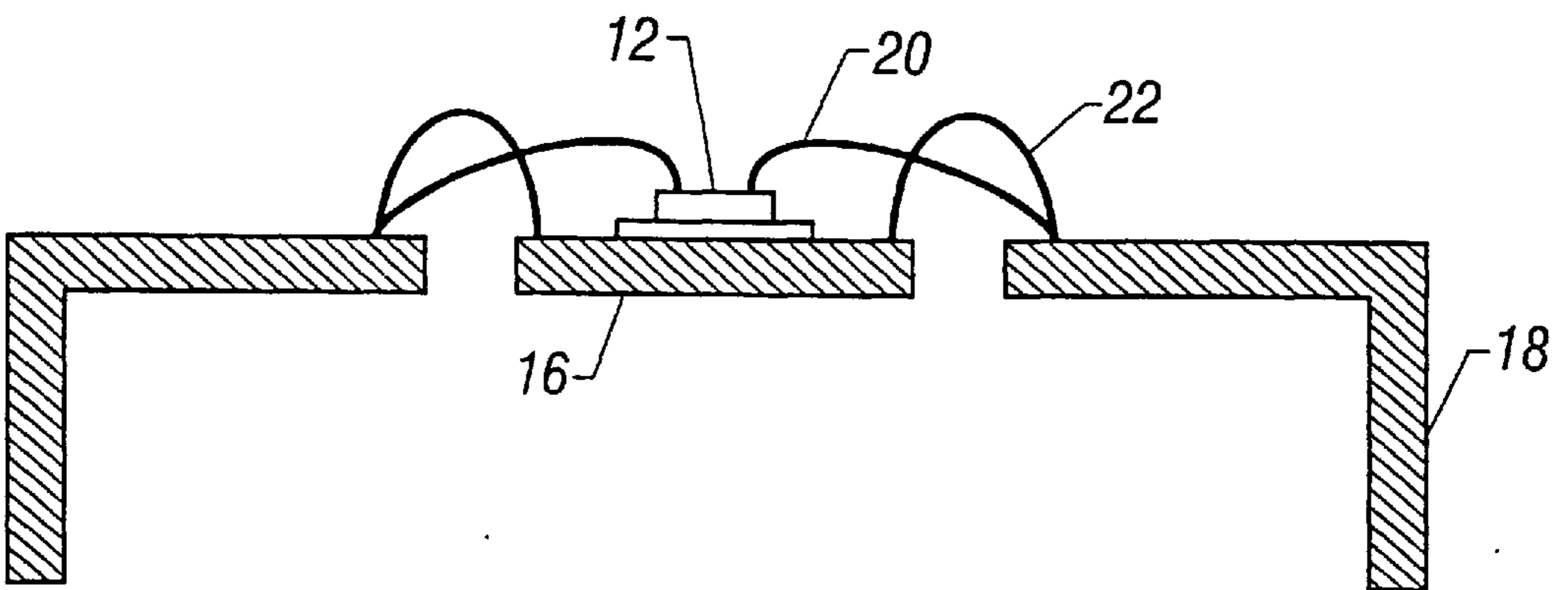


FIGURE 4

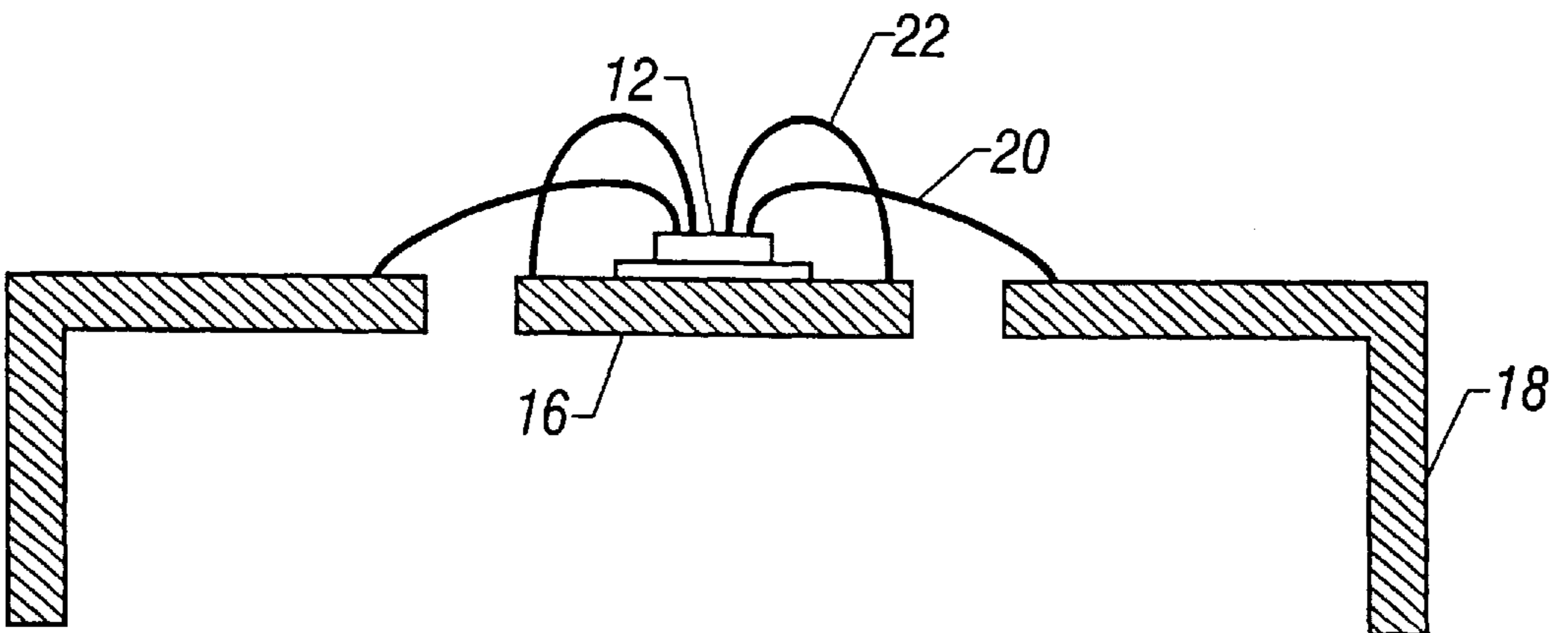


FIGURE 5

DIE POSITIONING IN INTEGRATED CIRCUIT PACKAGING

This invention relates generally to packaging integrated circuits and particularly to overmolded integrated circuit packaging.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Integrated circuit dice, commonly called integrated circuit chips, are typically mounted inside packages having contacts extending therefrom for communication with the outside world. These contacts may be used to output signals from the chip, to input signals to the chip, or for supplying power or ground connections.

In conventional overmolded technology, a package is formed around the integrated circuit chip which may be mounted on a metal lead frame. The chip may be mechanically connected to the lead frame paddle or to the leads in the case of a lead-on-chip ("LOC") configuration. The chip assembly may also be electrically interconnected by fine wires from chip bond pads to a variety of lead frame fingers which connect to the exterior contacts on the package. The chip assembly is then positioned in a mold and the final package configuration is defined by plastic molding around the chip assembly. Since the lead frame assembly is relatively flexible, the position of the die with respect to the overmolded portion of the package is not necessarily fixed.

Conventionally, the overmolding or encapsulant, which may be a plastic or epoxy, protects and insulates not only the intervening die or chip but the lead frame and the wire bonding wires as well. With a chip assembly in a mold, the encapsulant is injected into the mold and air is exhausted from the opposite end of the mold.

The way the encapsulant enters the mold may cause the die to be displaced, either up or down depending on the lead frame, mold, and package design and on the encapsulation material and process. This may result in package bowing, stress location changes, increased delamination or cracking due to internal stress.

Thus, there is a need for techniques which help to maintain the die centered in overmolded packaging.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, a packaged integrated circuit device includes a die and a plurality of leads. First bond wires are connected between the leads and the die for electrical communication. A second wire bond wire extends vertically over the die above the height of the first wire bond wires. The second wire bond wire is electrically nonfunctional.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, an integrated circuit package includes a die assembly including a die and a plurality of leads. A spacer extends upwardly from the die assembly to space the die from the overmolding mold.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, a packaged integrated circuit device includes a die and a plurality of leads. The integrated circuit device has wire bond wires connected between the leads and the die for electrical communication. A spacer, connected to the die, extends upwardly above the die and is arranged to contact a mold utilized for overmolding of the die.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, a method of forming integrated circuit packages includes the step of wire bonding a die to a plurality of leads.

A spacer wire is formed by wire bonding. The spacer wire extends upwardly over the wire bonding between the die and the leads.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, a method of forming an integrated circuit device includes the step of electrically connecting a die to a plurality of electrical contacts using wire bonding to form a die assembly. The integrated circuit device forms a spacer secured to the die assembly and extending upwardly. A mold contacts the spacer during the course of overmolding the die.

In accordance with still another aspect of the present invention, a method of forming an integrated circuit device includes the step of electrically connecting the die to a plurality of contacts to form a die assembly. The die assembly is placed in a mold. The die assembly is spaced from the mold using a spacer that extends over the die assembly and connects to the die assembly. The die assembly is then overmolded.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, a method of centering a die during encapsulation includes the step of forming a die assembly. The die assembly is secured to an element and the element is arranged to extend upwardly so as to center the die during encapsulation.

In these ways, the die may be maintained in the desired centered orientation, and the adverse effects of die displacement may be lessened.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a greatly enlarged cross-sectional view showing an integrated circuit package in the course of being overmolded;

FIG. 2 is a greatly enlarged top plan view of a lead finger and pad connected by the wire bonding wires, as shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a greatly enlarged cross-sectional view of another integrated circuit package;

FIG. 4 is a greatly enlarged cross-sectional view of another integrated circuit package; and

FIG. 5 is a greatly enlarged cross-sectional view of another integrated circuit package.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the drawing wherein like reference characters are used for like parts throughout the several views, an integrated circuit assembly **10**, shown in FIG. 1, is contained at least in part inside a package mold **25**. The mold **25** includes a pair of mold halves **25a** and **25b** which sealingly press against package leads **18**. The mold **25** contains a molding compound **14**. The molding compound **14** may be any conventional compound used for overmolding integrated circuit die or chips, including epoxy.

The die **12** may be mounted on a die paddle **16** of conventional design. While a particular form of package is illustrated in FIG. 1, the present invention is amenable to applications with a variety of conventional and advanced packages.

The leads **18** are connected to the die **12** by bonding wires **20**. The bonding wires **20** are used for establishing necessary electrical communication between the leads **18** and the die **12**. In addition, at least one spacer wire **22** is formed by wire bonding. The spacer wire **22** extends vertically above the bonding wires **20**. The wires **20** and **22** are formed in the same process, using conventional wire bonding technology.

While the wires **20** serve electrical functions, the spacer wires **22** are preferably connected so that they do not have any electrical impact. Instead the wires **22** provide a spacing between the mold **25** and the die **12** that insures that the die **12** is centered in the package. Because the wires **22** are connected to the die and extend upwardly therefrom, when the mold **25** contacts the wires **22**, which are in turn connected to the die **12**, the position of the die within the molded part is determined. In addition, the bonding wires **20** are buried sufficiently within the package to prevent their extension too close to the top of the molding compound **14**.

In this way the wires **22** provide an efficient spacing function which does not materially change the manufacturing process. In addition, using the wires **22** does not require additional parts inventory or different processing steps.

Referring to FIG. 2, each bonding wire **20** extends from a bond pad **26** to a lead **18**. The spacer wires **22** on the other hand may simply connect at two spaced positions to a lead **18** which is also electrically connected by a wire **20** to a die bond pad **26**. In addition, the spacer wires **22** could connect to the die paddle **16** at two spaced locations, as shown in FIG. 3, or the wires **22** could extend between a lead **18** and the die paddle **16**, as shown in FIG. 4, or the wires **22** could connect between a die pad **28** and the die paddle **16**, as shown in FIG. 5. The wire bonds to the bond pads **26** and the leads **18** are the same regardless of whether the wire **20** or **22** is utilized.

Advantageously, the spacer wires **22** are aligned with the encapsulant flow direction indicated by the arrow A in FIG. 2, from inlet **32** to outlet **34**, to minimize wire sweep.

In this way the die remains centered in the package without the need for additional components or additional process steps. Ideally, the spacer wires should be sufficient in number to accurately position the die as desired within the package. The number of spacer wires **22** will vary with the application but could be one or several as particular circumstances dictate.

While the present invention has been described with respect to a limited number of preferred embodiments, those skilled in the art will appreciate numerous modifications and variations therefrom. It is intended that the appended claims cover all such modifications and variations as fall within the true spirit and scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A packaged integrated circuit device comprising:
a die;

a plurality of leads;

first wire bond wires connected between said leads and said die for electrical communication, said first wire bond wires having a highest part spaced above said die; and

a second wire bond wire extending vertically above the highest part of the first wire bond wires, said second wire bond wire being electrically nonfunctional.

2. The device of claim 1 wherein said second wire bond wire is formed by wire bonding using the same process as is utilized for forming said first wire bond wires.

3. The device of claim 1 wherein said first wire bond wires are connected to bond pads on said die.

4. The device of claim 3 wherein said first and second wire bond wires are connected to said leads by wire bonding.

5. The device of claim 4 wherein said second wire bond wire is connected only to a lead.

6. The device of claim 5 wherein said second wire bond wire is connected to a lead at two spaced locations.

7. The device of claim 3 including a die paddle, said die mounted on said die paddle, said second wire bond wire is connected to said die paddle at two spaced locations.

8. The device of claim 3 including a die paddle, said die mounted on said die paddle, said second wire bond wire is connected to said lead and to said die paddle.

9. The device of claim 3 including a die paddle, said die mounted on said die paddle, said second wire bond wire is connected to a bond pad and to said die paddle.

10. A packaged integrated circuit device comprising:

a die assembly including a die and a plurality of leads; and a bonded wire extending upwardly above said die assembly to space the die from a mold used for overmolding, said wire being connected to a lead at two points.

11. A packaged integrated circuit device comprising:

a die;

a plurality of leads;

wire bond wires connected between said leads and said die for electrical communication; and

a spacer extending upwardly above said die and arranged to contact a mold utilized for overmolding said die, said spacer being connected to a lead at two spaced locations.

12. The device of claim 11 wherein said spacer is connected only to a lead.

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